



Homelessness Review 2016

Executive Summary

- While the priority in housing policy for national government is home ownership it continues to promote preventing and tackling homelessness and action on rough sleeping within the framework of welfare reform and public sector spending restraint.
- In the context of seeking to create sustainable communities Warwick District Council regards housing as a priority theme and aims to tackle housing needs through its Housing Strategy and Local Plan.
- There have been big increases locally in both the numbers of homelessness applications received and the numbers accepted by the council. Both rose by a higher proportion than was the case nationally.
- The numbers accommodated in temporary accommodation at the year-end rose more slowly locally than nationally and the overall number per 1,000 households was well below the national average.
- Warwick District Council makes more use of local authority/housing association accommodation for temporary accommodation than is the case across England.
- Official rough sleeper counts show a significant increase in the district in 2015. Longer term, since 2010 the increase has been below the national increase.
- The main reasons for homelessness are "termination of an assured shorthold tenancy" and "parents no longer willing or able to accommodate". These were also the two most common causes in 2010 albeit in reverse order.
- A downward trend in those becoming homeless as a result of "violent relationship breakdown involving partner" between 2010 and 2014 has unfortunately reversed over the last two years but is still slightly below the level six years ago.
- The main priority need is overwhelmingly the presence of either children or an expected child in the household. Physical disability cases increased each year to 2014 but fell back in the two years since, to 3%. Conversely mental illness fell from 9% to 1% by 2013/14 but has risen again now to 5%.
- The number of cases where homelessness was either prevented or relieved increased by 39% from 2010 to 2014. It fell significantly in 2014/15 and despite a small rise in 2015/16 it is still well below the 2014 level.
- The ethnicity profile of accepted homeless cases shows some differences from the district profile with fewer white households and more who describe their ethnic origin as "other" or "not stated".
- Ministry of Justice figures on repossession actions show that social landlord actions have increased the most over the past six years. Private landlord actions have reduced albeit partly offset by more use of the accelerated landlord process. Mortgage actions have reduced the most of any tenure.
- Local agency data supplements the official statistics and provides valuable additional detail and context in describing the picture of homelessness locally.

1 Introduction

Under the Homelessness Act 2002 district councils have a duty to prepare a Homelessness Strategy and, in order to inform this, may undertake a homelessness review for their district.

Warwick District Council's current Homelessness Strategy lasts until 2017 and we are therefore doing a new homelessness review to help with the preparation of a replacement strategy. As the council's Housing Strategy also runs until 2017 we are taking the opportunity to combine the two into a single cohesive strategy for the district from 2017.

The action plan for the current strategy is being reviewed with local service providers to see how much has been done and whether there are any outstanding actions that should be carried forward into the new strategy.

Nevertheless a homelessness review is still important to inform the relevant elements of the new strategy. This report contains a range of statistics about homelessness in the Warwick district since the last strategy was introduced in 2015 and compares this with the national situation.

2 Government policy

Nationally government policy on housing since the 2015 General Election has shifted significantly towards the promotion and extension of home ownership. However it continues to fund the National Homelessness Advice Service and increasingly sees homelessness prevention as critical: it has continued the homelessness prevention funding of £315 million across the current Spending Review period.

The ministerial working group set up under the coalition government continues to meet, bringing together nine different departments across government to ensure that the policy agendas of those departments recognise and take account of homelessness and how what they do interacts with it. It has set up a programme of work to address the underlying factors of homelessness, looking at rough sleeping, mental and other health services and ex-offenders. A joint project between the Department for Communities & Local Government and the Department of Health is spending £40 million on improving the quality of hostels while, in the Budget, the Chancellor announced £100 million to create 2,000 places of move-on accommodation for rough sleepers leaving hostel accommodation and domestic abuse victims and their families moving on from refuges. This in turn will free up hostel places for others.

In addition the budget included: £10 million over two years to support and scale-up prevention and reduction of rough sleeping and a doubling in funding for the Rough Sleeping Social Impact Bond from £5 million to £10 million, to drive innovative ways of tackling entrenched rough sleeping.

The government has also commissioned a review of supported housing in the context of restrictions on Housing Benefit for social housing although at the time of writing the report is still awaited.

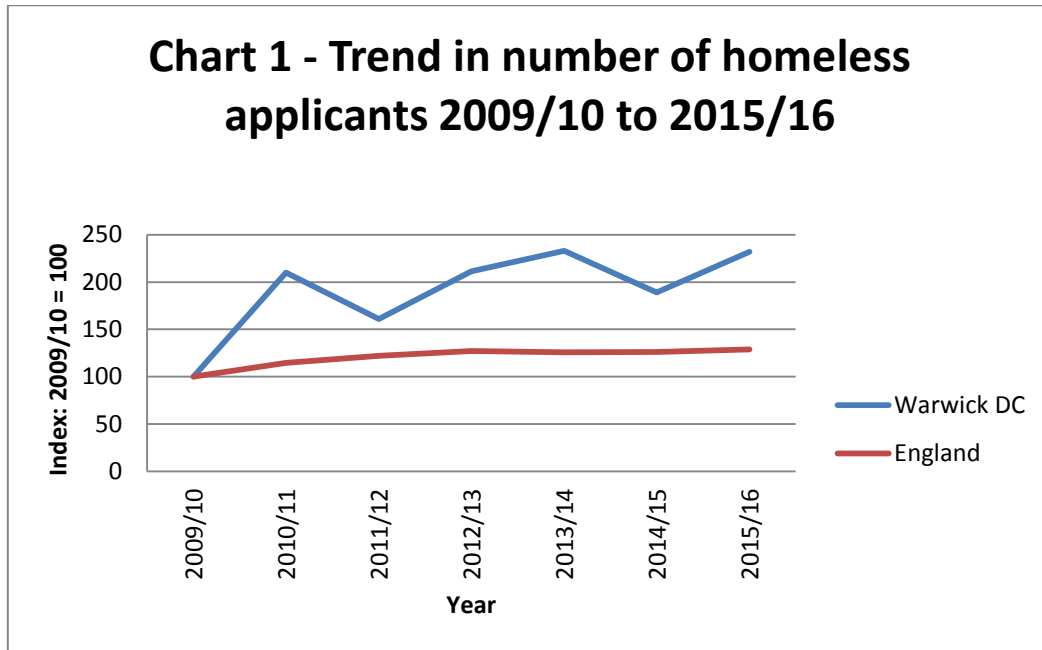
3 National & local homelessness statistics

The following statistics help to build up a picture of homelessness in Warwick district since the last Homeless Strategy was written in 2014/15 and over the longer term back to 2010 in comparison to what has been happening nationally.

a) Levels of homelessness

The council received 705 applications from people applying as homeless in 2015/16. This was broadly similar to the number of 708 in 2013/14 but an increase of 132% on the number received in 2009/10 compared to a 29% increase nationally over the same time period. Chart one shows the trend over the past seven years compared to the national position. It can be seen that the local trend has been much more erratic.

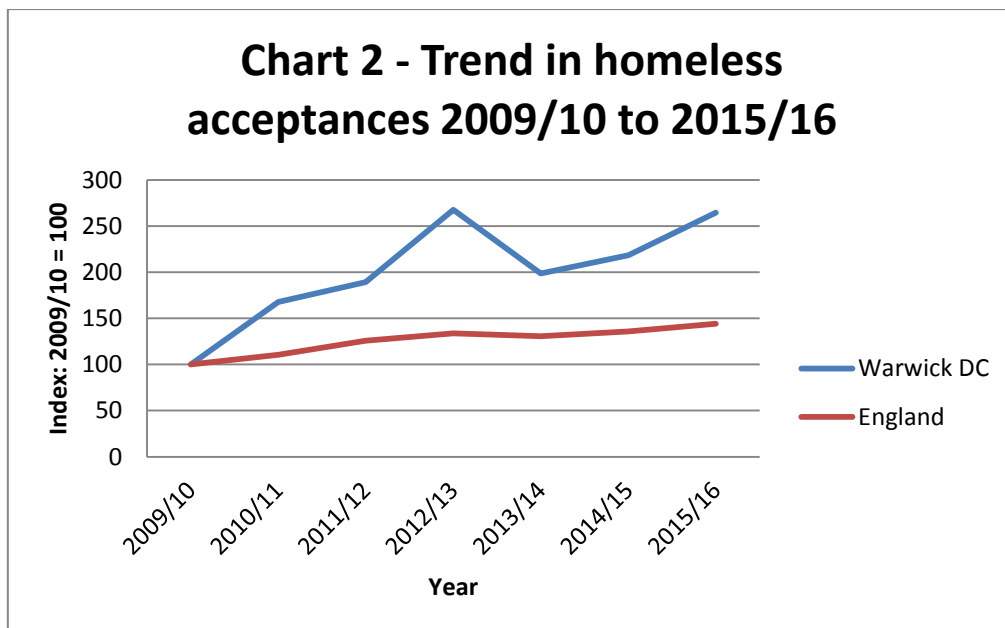
Chart 1 - Trend in number of homeless applicants 2009/10 to 2015/16



Around half of all applicants (54%) were assessed as not homeless, not significantly different from 2013/14 or from 2009/10.

The number of applicants for which a "full" duty was accepted was 172 in 2015/16, an increase of 164% over the number accepted in 2009/10 compared to a 44% increase nationally. The trend has followed the national pattern as chart two shows but the size of the changes has been significantly bigger locally.

Chart 2 - Trend in homeless acceptances 2009/10 to 2015/16



The percentage of all applicants for which a full duty was accepted was below national levels but rose from 21% in 2009/10 to 24% in 2015/16 compared to a national rise from 45% to 50%.

b) Numbers accommodated

The number of homeless households accommodated in temporary accommodation at the year-end increased from 10 at 1st April 2010 to 13 at 31st March 2016. This represented an increase of 30% compared to a national increase of 39%.

In terms of current numbers, 13 cases represent 0.22 per thousand households in WDC compared to 3.1 for England as a whole.

The proportion of households accommodated in local authority/housing association stock is considerably higher locally at 46% than nationally (18%).

c) Rough sleeping

The official Rough Sleeper counts over the last six years are as follows.

Year	Rough Sleeper count
2010	12
2011	13
2012	11
2013	14
2014	14
2015	19

This represents a 58% increase locally. Although this is well below the national increase of 102% over the same period, it is nevertheless a substantial increase in its own right and the annual figures suggest that there is a clear upward trend in the local figures.

Figures from Leamington Night Shelter showed that that they had 261 different clients in the 12 months up to and including September 2015 of which an estimated 59 were rough sleepers.

d) Reasons for homelessness

Table two shows the five main causes of homelessness in 2010/11 and 2015/16.

2010/11		2015/16	
Cause	%	Cause	%
Parents no longer willing or able to accommodate	28	Termination of assured shorthold tenancy	37
Termination of assured shorthold tenancy	25	Parents no longer willing or able to accommodate	21
Violent relationship breakdown involving partner	16	Violent relationship breakdown involving partner	13
Loss of rented accommodation (excluding termination of assured shorthold)	10	Relatives/friends (excluding parents) no longer willing/able to accommodate	9
Relatives/friends (excluding parents) no longer willing/able to accommodate	10	Non-violent relationship breakdown with partner	7

Four of the major causes of homelessness in 2010/11 were also significant in 2015/16. There was an increase of 12% in the proportion made homeless due to termination of an assured shorthold tenancy although loss of other rented accommodation fell and is no longer among the five main causes. The proportion due to parents no longer being willing or able to accommodate fell by 7%.

A downward trend in those becoming homeless as a result of “violent relationship breakdown involving partner” between 2010 and 2014 has unfortunately reversed over the last two years but is still slightly below the level six years ago.

e) Types of priority need

The main reason for priority need is the presence of children or an expected child in the household. Together these accounted for 83% of cases in 2015/16, down slightly from 85% in 2010/11.

The proportion of cases where physical disability was the priority need increased each year, from 2% up to 7% in 2013/14 but fell back in the two years since, to 3%. Conversely mental illness fell from 9% to 1% in 2013/14 but has risen again now to 5%. No other category accounted for more than 2% of cases in 2010/11. However in 2015/16 those fleeing their home due to violence or threat of violence accounted for 5% of cases.

f) Preventions

The number of cases of prevention/relief increased massively in 2010/11 (from 98 to 269) but fell back in each of the following two years to 108 in 2012/13 before rising again to 136 in 2013/14. It fell to 58 in 2014/15 but rose to 71 in 2015/16.

The fall in the number of cases of prevention over the last two years is similar to the national situation, although the proportionate size of the fall is much larger locally at 48% than nationally where it was only 7%.

g) Ethnicity of accepted homeless cases

The following table shows the ethnic profile of accepted homeless applicants compared with the profile of the Warwick District Council area.

Table 3 – Ethnicity of accepted homeless cases 2015/16		
Ethnic group	Profile of Warwick DC Census 2011	Profile of accepted homeless cases
White	89	78
Black/Black British	1	3
Asian/Asian British	7	5
Mixed	2	2
Other	1	8
Not stated	0	4

The two profiles differ in that there is an 11% lower proportion of white households accepted as homeless, a 7% higher proportion of those classed as "other" and 4% who didn't give their details.

h) Ministry of Justice repossession action statistics

Table four overleaf shows repossession statistics from the courts in Warwick district from 2010 to 2015.

These figures are compiled from quarterly figures where any value below five is suppressed. In adding together figures for four quarters the suppressed data could be significant enough to cause errors. They are therefore included here for illustration only and should not be used for statistical analysis.

This shows that for mortgaged properties, despite occasional single year rises, the number of claims brought and the number of each of the various outcomes have fallen significantly between 2010 and 2015. Claims by private landlords fell too although this has in part been offset by an increase in landlords using the accelerated procedure. As regards social landlords there was a substantial increase in the number of claims while the number of possessions nearly doubled.

Table 4 – Ministry of Justice repossession statistics in WDC 2010 – 2015

Possessor type	Possession action	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Social Landlord	Claims	160	160	170	283	209	259
Social Landlord	Suspended Orders	96	104	103	149	151	121
Social Landlord	Outright Orders	44	42	52	55	30	47
Social Landlord	Warrants	77	94	127	142	131	156
Social Landlord	Possessions	23	49	36	50	38	45
Private Landlord	Claims	33	31	27	28	21	6
Private Landlord	Outright Orders	14	24	23	20	9	-
Private Landlord	Warrants	0	3	10	9	7	-
Private Landlord	Possessions	0	6	3	7	6	-
Mortgage	Claims	108	96	80	91	65	14
Mortgage	Outright Orders	47	35	33	28	-	-
Mortgage	Suspended Orders	34	30	32	30	8	-
Mortgage	Warrants	79	85	72	69	40	25
Mortgage	Possessions	26	53	29	19	7	-
Accelerated Landlord	Claims	15	25	40	25	35	25
Accelerated Landlord	Outright Orders	11	18	31	28	17	18
Accelerated Landlord	Warrants	0	0	7	6	6	-
Accelerated Landlord	Possessions	0	0	4	0	-	-

4 Local Agency data

There are several local agencies that provide services for vulnerable people and the homeless in the Warwick district. Some of these have provided data about their work for inclusion in this review which is invaluable in supplementing the council's own statistics. Details are included in this section.

ROOF Homeless & Housing - advice & support for 16yrs - 19yrs

(The project will work with people up to age 25 years if the client has a disability.)

In the calendar year of 2015 a total of 13 individuals were supported, one of them on two separate occasions. Ten of the individuals were female and three were male. This was a decrease of 65% on the previous year's total of young people supported.

The individuals were supported in a variety of ways such as, over the phone advice, making a benefit claim, purchasing new clothing, one-to-one mentoring, filling out referral forms for supported accommodation, moving into supported accommodation, advocacy support, adult safeguarding, Children's Services, assessment interviews, Priority Families referral and starting Common Assessment Framework (CAF), support around sexuality, food shopping and family mediation to allow the young person to return home and mental health support.

Warwick District Citizens' Advice

The service took 287 enquiries about homelessness in 2015/16, down from 318 the previous year. The majority in each year were from people who were threatened with homelessness but there were also significant numbers of cases of actual homelessness and enquiries on the local authority homelessness service.

The three main reasons for homelessness were "friends or relatives unable/unwilling to house", "local authority possession action" and "private landlord possession action" in that order.

As regards gender the majority of clients were female (58%) while in terms of household types 69% were single people and there were slightly more employed than unemployed people.

Of those with a disability or long-term health problem, the largest number had some form of mental health problem, followed by people with a long-term health condition.

Leamington Night Shelter

Over the six months to March 2016 the Leamington Night Shelter had 291 different clients of which 62 were rough sleepers. It had an average of 83 different clients per month. The average number of clients each evening was 29 and on average ten people stayed overnight. The graph over the page shows the long-term trend in number of different clients attending and, in the grey shaded areas, the number of repeat attenders over time in each cohort of 100 different clients.

LEAMINGTON NIGHT SHELTER

